

5111  
Near East  
Armenia

# TWILIGHT IN ARMENIA

*By*

FULLERTON L. WALDO

*Associate Editor, Philadelphia Public Ledger*



Above: On the road from Alexandropol to Erivan—a fine roadway, Russian built.

Below: On the high road from Erivan, the political capital, to Etchmiadzin, the spiritual capital of Armenia.



Below: Anybody who can gets aboard a train going anywhere!



Above: Transporting the orphans from Erivan to Alexandropol, in box cars.



Below: Before (left) and after falling into the hands of the Near East Relief: Armenian orphan boys.



# Twilight in Armenia

By

Fullerton L. Waldo, 1877-

*Associate Editor of Philadelphia  
Public Ledger*

Near East Relief

1 Madison Avenue

New York City

1920



# Twilight in Armenia

BY

FULLERTON L. WALDO.

*Associate Editor of Philadelphia "Public Ledger."*

---

## I.

### INTRODUCTION.

The findings here set forth are the impressions I have formed during a visit to Armenia of several weeks' duration. I arrived at Batum Saturday morning, August 21, reached Tiflis, Sunday, August 22, left Tiflis August 30, arrived at Alexandropol, Tuesday, August 31, left Alexandropol, Thursday, September 2, reached Erivan via motor car through Karaklis and Dilijan that evening, left Erivan for Ararat, Sunday, September 5, returned to Erivan September 13, reached Alexandropol September 16, left Alexandropol on the afternoon of September 19, and reached Tiflis again September 20. I sailed from Batum September 29, and from Constantinople October 5.

The observations offered under these conditions of rapid travel and cursory inspection are not to be taken for more than they are worth. They cannot have the value that attaches to research and the thorough-going analysis which long residence makes possible. My report is merely to be regarded as a supplementary individual contribution to the more elaborate and extended investigations that others have made. It is one man's fugitive glimpse of a complex and many-sided situation, which not even such a painstaking study as that of the Harbord Commission is competent to measure to the full length and breadth of its dimensions.

The heart-rending conditions of acute distress that cried out to Heaven from the highways and the byroads of Armenia a year ago have been in a marked and a marvelous degree abated by the work of the Near East Relief, for which the

American people with an exemplary generosity supplied the funds, aided by the self-helpful efforts of Armenians at home and abroad. But the burial of the dead and the succor of the despairing survivors with flour and clothing and medical relief have not at once solved all the problems of human want and woe that are the legacy of the whole of the Christian era to the two years of Armenian independence.

As a Christian country, Armenia is venerable; but as a political entity, Armenia is a toddling infant. Yet there are people who expect today's government of Armenia to function as though it had a well-oiled working machinery with a corps of schooled and practised engineers. These hasty critics in their impatience are expecting the oxcart to turn itself overnight into an automobile. The West cannot serve the East merely by prodding it and telling it to hurry. The West must patiently deal with the force of immemorial customs and with habits as firmly rooted as a tree. There is need on both sides of tolerance, perception and sympathy. But a compassionate understanding on the part of Americans working in Armenia need not and should not spell a flabby knuckling under to the trickery, the intrigue and the corruption that often masquerade as patriotism in the building up of a new country or the maintenance of an old one. There are rogues in business in Armenia as there are in America. It is the business of the Americans to help the new Armenia to seek out and put down oppressors and foes within the household, as well as the external enemies. It is the business of Armenians to co-operate in all ways with their friends from America and not interpose obstacles through false pride or petty vanity or an ill-timed super-assertion of sovereignty. Those who want to be helpful must put themselves in a position to be helped. In general, the attitude of the government of Armenia is that of most grateful, heartfelt and outspoken appreciation, and the desire to co-operate. It cannot be expected that in every particular connection friction will be avoided, for the personal contacts are those of human nature, not of angels.

## COUNTRY AND PEOPLE.

The first sight of the land is like first love, an unforgettable experience. Suppose we come from Tiflis by the single-track rail-route whose vital importance Walter George Smith in all his writings and addresses has pointedly and rightly emphasized. The beauty of riding behind an oil-burning locomotive is that you have nothing in your eyes except the view. Our train had two box cars with freight, six flat cars with eight motor cars thereon, Mr. Yarrow's small private car, two box cars carrying a few passengers and the train crew. That train, leaving Tiflis on the evening of August 30, was to be the last supply-carrying train of the Near East Relief for an indefinite period, and I had waited eight days for it to leave. Each day a Georgian train goes to Sanain beyond the Georgian border, but our special, hauled by a Georgian locomotive, was to go past Sanain and on through the No Man's Land all the way to Alexandropol in Armenia.

This unhappy arrangement of a neutral zone was paralyzing traffic into or out of Armenia, and it calls for description at the outset. From Sadaklo on the north at the Georgian frontier to Kalageram on the south, at the Armenian frontier, the distance by rail is about fifty versts or approximately thirty miles. Sanain, where the Georgian customs examination is held, is about two-thirds of the way across the zone from the Georgian boundary. Though the train goes to Sanain from Tiflis every day, it is a common thing to have to wait at Sanain several days for a train to carry one from this point into Armenia. The distance from Sanain to the Armenian border of Kalageram is about fifteen versts or nine miles. The neutral zone is something of a polite fiction, but international sensitiveness between Georgia and Armenia maintains the semblance of a buffer state. The British first put in a provisional government here which was supplanted by the Haskell administration and now a joint commission of Georgians and Armenians is supposed to regulate the area. The indeterminate political status of this zone has given undesirable citizens of both countries a place of refuge.

A still more serious barrier to transportation is the want of mazout (crude petroleum) to run the trains. The oil of the Caucasus is in the hands of the Bolsheviks at Baku in Azerbaijan. The Georgians, having made their peace with the Bolsheviks, are enabled to get oil for their trains between Tiflis and Batum. But Armenia is not so fortunate. Armenia has to depend upon the concession of oil to her by Georgia. All that she gets she obtains by favor, and Georgia thus has a coercive economic weapon to brandish over the heads of the Armenian government whenever she pleases. Georgia can throttle the railway from Tiflis to Tabriz at its northern terminus precisely as one man may take another by the throat and choke him. The present condition is a final demonstration of the absolute necessity of giving Armenia one or two outlets to the sea. She cannot, and we as her friends and helpers cannot afford to let her life depend on the caprice of a jealous neighbor. At present, there is no movement on the rails between Erivan and Tabriz in Persia. Between Alexandropol, Kars and Sarikamish an engine, owned by the N. E. R., hauls wood. The result of the prevailing stagnation on the rails is that every station is the camping ground of many persons waiting hours and days on the chance of a seat in a train. People travel on flat cars, piled high with their bedding and household goods, in fair weather or foul. Station masters, train hands and guards receive varying sums more or less openly to have cars of merchandise attached to the trains or to provide passenger accommodations. If, for any reason, a car is side-tracked it may remain indefinitely and none assumes responsibility for the destruction. Under these circumstances, it becomes exceedingly difficult for the N. E. R. to move the orphans which are now the objects of its particular concern. The personnel must chiefly depend on more or less rickety motor-cars subject incessantly to punctures and blow-outs in the hands of chauffeurs deficient in the mechanical instinct or in the proper training. Innumerable vexatious delays occur in the shipment of supplies as well as in the movement of passengers. It is sometimes necessary for chil-



dren in the process of transfer from one orphanage to another to remain from twenty-four to forty-eight hours aboard a box car before a start is made.

The visitor to Armenia for the first time cannot fail to be impressed by the wild majestic beauty of the mountain scenery along the route from Tiflis. Could this region be lifted by some Aladdin's carpet magic to America it would make the fortunes of the tourist agencies, and if Armenia could live on scenery she would run no risk of undernourishment. The railway owes much to a narrow brown river for carrying the route through the gorges among the beetling crags. There are fantastic castles and battlements sculptured in the rocks; there are torn, gnarled, weather-beaten and frost-shattered ridges into which nature has thrust a bushy green tree wherever she could; and here and there devout mankind has planted a cross or a temple for the worship of nature's God. Occasionally a giant rampart of pink honeycombed rock flings itself clear across the chasm and the train must swing around it with the river leaping buoyantly below. The path for the iron horse must be hewn out of the living rock. With a shriek the train dives into a tunnel to emerge among bare peaks, jagged as a lightning-flash, or into a quiet interval of haymaking in high Alpine pastures and maize fields in the lower reaches. The mountains seem bursting with the sense of the mineral secrets they are keeping. The French have a small copper plant at Akpala. There is another French plant at Allah Verdi, which is, being interpreted, "God Gave." How lovely is the name of that hoary summit rising to 13,445 feet over Alexandropol—"Alagöz," the Eye of God! One such mountain is the glory of a land, and Armenia has many peaks of magnitude besides this great mountain and the mighty Ararats of which we shall have more to say presently.

At the Georgian border—Sadaklo—at midnight, the Georgian authorities wished to search our Near East Relief special car, but they were dissuaded. They had not received a telegram of authority which should have been dispatched

from Tiflis, so that after all they were merely standing on the letter of their instructions. Women in a box car following were not so fortunate. One had two pairs of stockings confiscated. Another would have lost the pieces of cloth she had cut out for a dress, but the sum of 450 rubles was paid in her behalf and the dress was saved. The Georgian customs authorities, I am told, get sixty to seventy per cent. of what is confiscated.

There are few lovelier sights than the daybreak vista of the chocolate torrent rushing between the high wooded mountain walls with the mists alternately enshrouding and revealing the higher summits in the cool gray of the earliest morning hours. The peaceful beauty of today is in sharp contrast with the turbulence of former days. The first three months of 1918 were a difficult period for train men or passengers along this route. The Tartars were constantly on the prowl ready to intercept the passage of the trains.

In our case it was indeed a halting progress, because we were a special train and we had to pause at every station and telephone ahead to the next to learn if the track was clear. At one point the wires were down and there was a wait of two hours while four men went forward in a handcar to the next village. A more serious matter was that on rounding a hairpin turn in the rocks we smashed into a handcar coming toward us with six men. They jumped off just in time, dragging with them the platform of their car, but they could not derail the wheels. Three of the wheels were found beneath our train and the fourth was seen no more.

The very air has in it a tang and an exhilarating influence. One begins to feel as the train climbs onward through the mountain vales that nothing but the freedom of the eagle will do for this people. Here are sites for health resorts and sanatoria enough for the maladies of all the world. The engineer with his appraising eye will at once remark the possibilities of hydro-electric power to be derived from the swift, untrammelled current.

In the neighborhood of the stations appear garden plots

with sunflowers and meadows with tanned haycocks. One man is raking the moistened roof of his hut and a solitary horseman turns in the saddle to watch us as his horse quickens its pace at the sight of the rival iron steed. The velvet-flanked valley opens wide at Karaklis with its poplars, its gardens, its grey-domed church holding the cross on high. Above are grassy summits, the color of elephant's hide, with vast uplands reaching to the dazzling blue and white and the soft cloud shadows poised on barren moorlands. In the grateful patch of shade made by the willows or the poplars the sheep and goats are gathered and a small herdsman in fuzzy brown headgear like a bearskin is faithfully watching.

Except where nature stands the fields on edge, like a man shuffling cards, or spreads a bleaching fan of pebbles in a dry river bed, you will find the open arable spaces assiduously farmed. In Armenia, it is the farms, not the build-ings, that are the sky scrapers. The cattle, you would suppose, had climbing irons on their feet. You will often see them standing on the naked sky line as clear in the silhouette as though cut out of cardboard. Each native village offers the same picture of one-story sod-roofed houses, piles of straw on many a roof, brown haycocks and the plumes of the poplar trees.

The road bed itself is in first-class condition. Whatever else goes to rack and ruin it is cared for like an only child. For the whole length of the route it is swept and garnished. Our train took twenty hours to make the run of one hundred and thirty-seven versts to Alexandropol. That is at the rate of about four miles an hour, for a little more than eighty miles. We were exceptionally fortunate. Two weeks before, the Armenian captain who was with us waited three days at Sanain. On the way up from Erivan to Alexandropol on the return trip we took twenty-three hours for a journey of about the same length. Every now and then the engine, even if it has a supply of oil, goes off and leaves the train for a couple of hours in order to get water. It is no longer possible to say when a train will start. At Alexandropol for

the return to Tiflis we boarded our box car at four on the assurance that it would leave at eight in the evening. It did not leave until two-thirty o'clock the next afternoon, eighteen and a half hours after the announced time. Passenger traffic is all but non-existent. The only way to do is to camp out at the station until the train goes, and the only information you get, even from the station master, is misleading. At Alexandropol there are more than fifty locomotives, but only a few are able to run. They have been used as quarries for repair materials, and it would take several of them to make a complete engine.

At Alexandropol I was introduced to the chief feature of the present enterprise of the Near East Relief in Armenia. This is the work for the orphans. One who sees the 10,000 children here housed and cared for in 148 buildings of black stone put up by the Russians for barracks and storehouses must at once take heart for the future of the country. The boys and girls are a splendid lot, well behaved, docile, ready to learn, grateful and respectful, enduring very patiently the hardships of travel afoot and in box cars when moved from place to place. Many of the babies have trachoma, for the flies are a pest everywhere. In the hospital are hundreds of cases of the two dreadful skin diseases so common in the Orient—favus and scabies. Favus is the scalp disease, due to a vegetable growth which produces sores all over the head—pussockets, that kill the hair. The books say the malady is incurable. Dr. Hawthorne clips the hair and gives each child a treatment with bichloride of mercury and alcohol, wrapping a cloth about the head. The hairs, diseased at the roots, should be pulled out one by one, but the number of children forbids. Germicides do not destroy the favus. It clogs up the sebaceous glands. The hair follicles are destroyed and the hair will not grow. Bald spots are left as a permanent result.

Each child's clothing is removed and disinfected. As a rule, the children are over-clad when they come, even though undernourished. Malnutrition is frequently in evidence.

There is much malaria. Eye maladies are common. Dr. Der Boghosian, a graduate of Beirut, who was for fifteen years at the Aleppo Hospital, showed me an operation he had performed for the transplantation of skin from the forehead to make an eyelid.

Scabies and favus account for half the hospital cases. Scabies in every-day parlance is the itch. It is due to a bug under the skin. The first step toward a remedy is to give a bath of green soap. This breaks the blisters. Then the patient on three successive days is placed in a cabinet and fumigated with sulphur, and the bed and bedding are disinfected. Scabies has been rife year after year in the refugee camps. The extirpation of scabies and favus from Asia Minor would have a marked effect on the economic future and would go far to improve the morale of the population. The results obtained here at Alexandropol show what could be done on a greater scale with proper facilities and with a sufficient number of doctors and nurses. From August 1 to September 1, 894 favus cases were cured here, and at the latter date 200 patients were left in the hospital. At this hospital clever and attractive young Armenian women were serving as nurses, illustrating the possibilities of a fruitful career for many others who want their lives to count for the fullest value. There is not a trained nurse in Armenia, except for a few Russian women. There should be a training school to turn out at least fifty a year. Many more could find employment with the great group of orphans at Alexandropol, now enlarging from 10,000 to 15,000, and with the 10,000 to be cared for at Kars.

Dr. Hawthorne has under him nine doctors (all native) and sixty nurses (all but one native).

Trachoma is another characteristic malady. There were 300 cases of it among the orphans at the time of my visit. It is particularly an Oriental and a European disease, for which our immigration authorities are ever on the watch, since the admission of those who are suffering from it is against the law. In the initial stages, little white spots de-

velop on the eyelids which are treated with nitrate of silver or scraped with a curette. In extreme cases blindness results. Often the membrane must be cut out on the inside of the eyelid, and a piece grafted from the lips. The girls all have their hair clipped when they come, for cleanliness' sake, and it is not surprising that there are many tearful struggles over the deprivation. The one barber has his hands more than full. His wailful victims generally gather up the hair and take it away, unable to believe that in time nature will restore the silky tresses of which the shears have robbed them.

It is also a struggle to get the children to go barefooted. Of course, for the winter they must have shoes. Leather is very costly, and the local product is extremely poor. If the leather is improperly tanned, the life of the shoe is short. Some sandals made of raw leather with the hair still on proved worthless. Wood, mazout (oil) and shoes are the three chief needs in the supply department. The fuel situation is extremely serious. So many men are constantly being mobilized for the army that Armenia has had to let a record crop go to waste, and only the needs of day to day in the provision of fuel have been met. The winter threatens to see a repetition of the conditions of last winter, when the 23,000 refugees who occupied the Russian barracks now taken for orphans, burned the floor-beams, roof-beams and pillars and made necessary the very extensive repairs not yet completed.

Fortunately, this nearly treeless region at Alexandropol need not depend entirely on wood or oil for fuel. Cow dung, as in Texas, is often used. In the spring it is mixed with straw and shavings, cut into squares and stood on edge to harden, then stacked in piles. In winter it supplies hot fires with little ash and an acrid odor. In a native hut a fire is kindled in a pot in the centre of the floor and the inmates, wrapped in blankets, may put their feet in the hole.

At the Near East Relief warehouses, there is in 140-pounds sacks a six-months' supply of flour for 25,000 per-

sons. Colonel Haskell secured from France, the gift of the Red Cross, a shipment worth perhaps a million dollars. There is a supply of cloth (canton flannel) sent by Hoover with the intention originally of exchanging it for Kuban wheat. Armenia has never had factories. Russia has always taken the raw material. At Erivan there is very good cotton. All Armenia is a wool country. There is fine water-power at Karaklis and a mill might easily be erected there.

Women are busy at Alexandropol under N. E. R. auspices, weaving with hand spindles and looms. With Red Cross yarn they make cloth for which they are paid 28 rubles per arshin, or a ruble an inch. Since they can weave 20 arshins a day, they are able to earn 560 rubles. (The Armenian ruble dropped in a few weeks from 2200 to the dollar to 5000 for a dollar.)

The delicate lace-work and embroidery made by Armenian women is world-known. At present fine thread is almost unprocurable. Indeed, there is little thread of any sort. Seven hundred Caucasus rubles or three thousand five hundred Armenian rubles is the value of a large spool of good linen thread at Tiflis.

An agricultural school is in process of creation for the boys and instruction in irrigation is a part of the proposed curriculum. The girls' clothes are to be made in their own industrial school. Many boys find employment converting the plentiful supply of old tin cans into bowls, canteens, coffee pots and sprinklers. There are many condensed milk tins, since cow's milk is hard to get, and all fresh milk must be pasteurized.

Brushes, clothes-pins, checker-boards, card-trays, trunks and other articles, great and small, are made by the orphan boys. There is most hopeful promise in the development of manual training in a land where the skilled laborers are far too few. The educational ideal for the children is manual training half the time and book learning for the rest of the curriculum, which is what Dr. Eliot has said he desired to see at Harvard. In Armenia where there is a real enthusiasm for

reading and for literary pursuits, too much stress is laid on clerical employment instead of skilled manual labor. The country is in need not so much of intellectuals as of artisans. Armenian youths must be quite cured of the idea that it is degrading to work with one's hands at the lathe and the bench. Too many persons at present desire to supervise the work of others instead of producing on their own account.

The children, moreover, must be held to a strict sense of verity which is often absent in their elders. The latter are over-ready to return an answer which they think will please the employer, regardless of the actual facts. Ask a workman if he has done what he is paid to do and he will assure you that the job is completed. A personal inspection is likely to show that nothing has been done. This is especially true of plumbing and sanitation. An excuse is always ready. "Why are these toilets in such a filthy state?" "They are clogged underneath." "Why don't you disinfect?" "There is no lime." Those whose business it is to make the needful repairs will go out and dig here and there in an aimless way with only a remote idea as to the seat of the trouble or the means to be employed for its removal.

Laths are sawed by hand and very well sawed. The old-time Armenian carpenter or blacksmith in his own old-fashioned way is a genius. He is proud of his profession and his profession may be proud of him. The aptitude he shows must now be passed on to the upgrowing generation through industrial and technical training for the boys at the lathe and the forge, in carpentry and motor-car work; and a planing-mill, a hand-saw and similar features should be included in the training plants. As one wise in these matters said to me, "private industry is awaiting political stability." Peace at all her frontiers cannot come too soon for Armenia. Her man-power must be released from mobilization and remobilization for constructive effort in field and factory.

A year ago the dead and the dying filled the streets at Alexandropol. That tearful, tragic page is turned, and the work of today and tomorrow is for the living and for those who



have youth and strength to hold the future in their grasp. The children must be drilled in the sense of property-rights, of an unflinching code of honor, of ethical standards, and right morals, and scrupulous bodily cleanliness. They have been growing up in a period of social chaos. They cannot be allowed to run wild any longer. They must be kept from becoming thieves and beggars—the natural result of the refugee life which infests the railways, haunts the stations, and is destitute of home and family influences in a ragged, naked quest of bread, blind and deaf to every impulse save the elemental hankering for food.

There is a latent, imperfectly developed play-instinct in these Armenian children which is worthy in all ways of encouragement. They need to learn to play of their own motion, and not merely to sit passive with a touching and remarkable docility till a dance or a swing is suggested. The native young women who take care of the children and direct their simple amusements are admirably faithful and devoted. The children are born actors and actresses, and they go through their exercises with a delightful freedom from self-consciousness and entire ease and naturalness. I have known no keener pleasure during my journey than to find myself in the presence of a roomful of these clever and winsome children who have been so quick to take the impress of proper care and nourishment and thoughtful tuition.

In concluding this imperfect survey of Alexandropol, it should be noted that the workmen are in a chronic state of insurrection. It is almost impossible to keep them at their tasks. They would rather strike than eat. They get three meals a day in addition to their small pay, but they want the old system continued by which they had extra food for their families. On August 1 an executive order discontinued the privilege of buying flour for a nominal sum, and many men quit work as a result, especially the drivers of the oxen. Of course, there is dissatisfaction with the wages paid. The spirit of Bolshevism, pervasive in West and East alike, is prevalent here in certain circles.

From Alexandropol to Erivan I went by motor through Karaklis and Delijan and past Lake Sevanga, in order to inspect the proposed sites for an asylum for the blind orphans at Karaklis and a sanitarium for consumptives at Delijan. At Karaklis lives Madame Tairoff, a Russian, the widow of a benevolent Armenian possessed of a large measure of public spirit. Madame Tairoff for years maintained an orphanage at her own cost. She is now placing the buildings at the disposal of the Americans, with whom she co-operates in every way. There are orchards, gardens, a brook and grateful shade amid delightful mountain scenery, and the buildings are admirably suited to the uses designed for them, but the best asset of all is the kind and wise presence of Madame Tairoff herself. Without enlargement of the premises 112 blind orphans could find shelter here.

At Delijan there is a group of buildings likewise of most fortunate location, and a stream with groves and orchards and inspiring vistas of mountain country which would seem to constitute an ideal establishment for the care and cure of those afflicted with tuberculosis. It was the summer residence of a titled Russian who asks but a nominal rental. The main house has much piazza space which would enable the patients to spend their days and nights in the open air. The preparation of the buildings is going forward rapidly. At Delijan, near the centre of the village, resides the excellent Madame Yaraljoff, who is another fount of charity and hospitality and good will toward Americans. She said to me, "I now pay 12,000 rubles to ride from Karaklis with my little sac de voyage. In the old days my husband and I took 10,000 rubles for a voyage around the world."

Delijan has been threatened by the encroachment of the Bolsheviks from the Azerbaijan quarter. In August, 1920, a party of twenty Bolsheviks remained for three days in the village, to the alarm of the inhabitants, who took them to be the precursors of a larger number. Then the Armenian army came up, and the Bolsheviks beat a hasty retreat. The inhabitants feel sure they will not return.

The Russian-built road climbs from Delijan to Lake Sevana by a zig-zag of hairpin turns above the green valley. There are about twenty of these turns, and they raise the level by some 4000 feet from the 3000 of the valley floor, so that one descends a few hundred feet from the crest of the rise, to the sparkling blue waters of Lake Sevana at an altitude of over 6300 feet. On the higher land are several villages of the Molokans, the Russian pacifists, who, like the Doukhobors, ask nothing better than to be allowed to till the soil and pasture their flocks afar from war and the rumors of war. They are thrifty, severely pious and law-abiding, and there is no quarrel between them and their Armenian neighbors.

Lake Sevana presents a vast expanse of the bluest blue unflecked by smoke or sail and rimmed by bare, brown, porphyritic hills bleaching in the sun without a tree. The road runs along the edge for miles at a height of from one hundred to three hundred feet over the water. A tiny islet with an ancient church and a monastery is the summer home of the Katholikos, who as head of the church in Armenia is the papal counterpart. In the waters of this lake there is found a species of trout, said to be unknown elsewhere, of extraordinary size and of delicious flavor.

On the way from the lake to Erivan, Ararat appears, and from the moment that it is seen it commands the landscape. Its giant dome, like the lesser summits of Armenia, deceives the eye by a remarkable foreshortening into thinking it near at hand. When you come to the rim of the bowl that holds Erivan—a bowl opening out on the side toward the mountain—you learn that a sizable city with all its avenues of poplar trees, its walled vineyards and gardens, and its thousands of mud and stone houses, sinks away to insignificance upon the length and breadth of the far-flung plains and the lofty upheaval of the enormous mountain masses. We came down from the rim of the bowl through a choking cloud of white dust thicker than fog in London,

lifted by a wild free wind and hurled maliciously into one's eyes and ears.

The charm of Erivan is more in the green things that grow afield in the environs than in its ill-paved streets and its dilapidated buildings. This is the capital of a country that has had to postpone all the decorative values to a day of peace. There is a park with a small cafe, there is a popular club with band-music and a fashionable evening promenade, there are several ably-conducted and ably-written newspapers. Life is taken as light-heartedly as may be in a land enringed with enemies under a government encompassed with anxieties. One who comes from a settled land of stable credit, where every civilized advantage is within an easy reach, ought to suspend judgment if he finds that things are raw and crude in embattled and struggling Armenia. On the part of the government I saw in evidence a sincere desire to serve the people, a desire balked at every turn by the want of funds and materials, and the deplorable necessity of sending every able-bodied man of suitable years to service in the army on one border or another.

The Erivan plain is not healthy and tropical malaria is virulent. A ton of quinine a month is wanted in this region. It is worth, at Tiflis, 90,000 Caucasian rubles (or, at 1500 to the dollar, 60 dollars), for a kilogram—a little more than two pounds. There are plans for draining the rice-paddies on the plain that lies between Erivan and Ararat to get rid of the fever-breeding mosquito, as to whose unwelcome attentions any traveler in that region will bear witness. In one of the Tartar villages occupied by Armenians after the expulsion of the Tartars, the population has dwindled in a few months from 3400 to 800 through the prevalence of malaria. Since the French and the Italian governments forbid the exportation of quinine, America and England alone can supply the need. I owe these data to Dr. C. D. Ussher, whose services as physician and friend in need to a wide clientele continue to be invaluable. He is one of the heroes of the story of American missions in the Orient.

It is largely because of the unhealthful conditions at Erivan that the Near East Relief is removing the orphans to the bracing atmosphere of the higher level at Alexandropol. At the time of my visit about 4000 orphans remained at Erivan. I saw them well housed, well-fed and happy. The beds were not always so clean as they would be in institutional homes with unlimited laundry facilities, but a refugee child is a walking nursery of insect life, and with the coming and going of hundreds of children in box cars and a shortage of attendant personnel, it is not possible always to uphold the rigorous standards of personal cleanliness that should prevail. The district commander, Dr. L. O. Fossum, with years of experience as Lutheran missionary in Kurdistan, is a director of unquenchable energy, clean-cut executive direction, a personal forcefulness that makes him formidable to anybody who tries to "put something over" on him, and unquestionable devotion to the interests of the Near East Relief. The staff is in need of more men and women of the type he represents. That the one hundred and thirty-nine persons who carried on in Colonel Haskell's time have been reduced to twenty-nine does not mean that the imperative needs of impoverished Armenia have been commensurately reduced. It means that twenty-nine Americans are struggling to do the work of nearly five times the number. Most of the twenty-nine, under E. A. Yarrow's first-rate leadership, are exceedingly efficient workers. It is high time to engage for the staff the services of a number of specialists in medicine and industrial education. I realize that this recommendation is easy to offer on paper and difficult for all sorts of reasons to execute.

The warehouses and shops at Erivan are models of their kind, and the system of handling and distribution is admirable. I made two inspections of that division of the service and was pleased to learn of the excellence of the work of the native helpers, especially the blacksmiths, the carpenters and some of the office clerks.

In an interview, the Prime Minister (the Acting

President), Doctor Ohandjanian, expressed the warmest appreciation of all that America has done for Armenia. Presi-Ohandjanian, who speaks French fluently, is versed in the universal idiom of the scholar and the diplomat which would enable him to hold his own with any European chancellery. He seems a man of good sense and acumen, who puts the welfare of his country before the personal ambition which is the unfortunate obsession of too many factional leaders in Armenia. Not least among the plagues of that land is the excessive zeal of partisanship—even as in America. President Ohandjanian spoke wisely and well of the present and of the future. He has much at heart great schemes of irrigation for places now unfruitful. Hundreds of thousands of acres that are idle might be yielding cotton or grapes abundantly. At Olty a production of 350,000,000 pounds of coal per annum, he said, is possible. For the plans he has in mind, President Ohandjanian seeks an immediate investment on the part of foreigners of \$23,000,000, of which \$12,000,000 would go to the development of the abundant resources in water power. The capital for commercial development must come chiefly from America. Russia and Germany cannot supply it. For Armenia, English is the most important language. Armenia draws upon England, America and France for her political ideals. It is unfortunate that Turkish-Armenia does not speak Russian. For a decade or two to come the Russian language will be necessary. In establishing the new university at Erivan it will be expedient to employ Russian scholars or Armenians who speak Russian and are trained in Russia.

There are plans afoot to get wheat from Russia and oil from Rumania. One of the ministers of the Rumanian cabinet is an Armenian whose services may prove helpful in the latter connection.

Of the Armenian population 85 per cent. are farmers, and good farmers. That is one reason why Bolshevism will find it difficult to get a foothold. The peasants have their own land, varying in extent from 7 to 20 hectares according

to the region. There are virtually no large land owners. Any one who will work land can have it. Armenians from time immemorial have been adepts in irrigation—even before the coming of the Russians. Armenia has 2400 versts\* of macadamized roads. If sufficient quinine can be brought in from America and the swamps are petrolled the scourge of malaria will be abated. All these measures require means not now at the disposal of the infant Republic, and a credit of four to five years must be secured.

A talk with General Seboo, friend and colleague of Andranik, and commander of the front toward Azerbaijan was enlightening. The Bolsheviks, he said, came half way from the border to Karaklis on August 10, in defiance of an agreement which went into effect that day. The general and his forces drove them back. Since then (the date of our talk was September 3) there had been no serious fighting. On July 28 he had received an ultimatum from the Bolsheviks, and he had made this answer which appeared in the *London Times*: "The question is one for our respective governments and not for individual generals to decide." I told him that the answer did him credit as a soldier and a patriot. General Seboo went on to point out the imperative necessity of an outlet to the sea. Armenia at present procures ammunition only by permission of Georgia. The outlet, linking Armenia with Europe, will at once alter the economic and political situation. He then adverted to the love of the fatherland that inspired his troops. In the centuries of misrule, Armenians had learned an undying hatred of the galling Turkish yoke and they were determined to do everything in their power to redeem their land even with their lives. His men in the winters past were bootless and freezing in the trenches, and sat for long hours in the water, but they held their posts unflinchingly. The support of America has made Armenian independence possible, and imperishable gratitude is due to America.

I had an audience with His Holiness, the Katholikos, Kevork V, at Etchmiadzin. Etchmiadzin is malarial and the

---

\*1000 miles.

water is poor, and orphans are being taken from that place via Erivan to Alexandropol. The Katholikos lives with great simplicity in the monastery with its garden, in the shadow of the small cathedral built, as legend has it, on the spot where Christ in a vision appeared to Gregory the Illuminator. He sat at the end of a long apartment at a red-covered table, and fingered a string of amber beads as he talked. In appearance he is not unlike the late Reverend Doctor William H. Roberts. He wore a purple cap and a black robe, and at his back hung a ring with a picture of his cathedral church. In the ante-room the wall rug had a figure of martyred Armenia with the names of Armenian cities in broken columns.

The Katholikos rose and shook hands with dignity and cordiality. He speaks Armenian and Russian, and we availed ourselves of the services of an Armenian interpreter. He said he, as an Armenian, felt a deep sense of obligation to America, and was glad of the presence of a representative of the Near East Relief, Mr. Hubbard, at Etchmiadzin. It was wise, he believed, to transfer the orphans to Alexandropol, for the weather and the water were not good for them at Etchmiadzin. The Katholikos is anxious to have the religious training of the children supervised by Armenian bishops. Armenia, he said, is a little country, steadfast in her allegiance to God and to our Saviour during the Christian era, and she is anxious to preserve her historic religion for which such heroic sacrifices have been made. He wishes America had seen fit to assume a mandate. He has a high opinion of Ambassador Gerard. "Gerard is our friend," were his words. He likewise holds President Wilson in high esteem and, like his countrymen, was eager for Mr. Wilson's decision as to the frontiers of Armenia. He asked what the attitude of Senator Harding was regarding his country. "Armenians do not know much about Mr. Harding," he remarked. Coffee was served and His Holiness wrote in my copy of the Gospel according to St. John: "Blessed are those who take thought for the poor. Long live the merciful Christian American people. Kevork V, Patriarch of all the Armenians, Septem-



ber 3, 1920, Etchmiadzin." I also called on the scholarly Bishop Mezrop, director of the library, among his treasures. Mezrop is a man who meets on even terms the scholars of the western world, for he is a priest of truly liberal culture and fine feeling, with a real love of the books and manuscripts in his keeping. I gave him the greetings of Professor Conybeare, of Oxford, his friend, and he showed me with pride Professor Conybeare's monumental catalogue of the Armenian and Georgian manuscripts in the British Museum. Bishop Mesrop is himself a two-fold doctor: his degrees were taken at the universities of Dorpat and Petrograd. He showed me very fine illuminated missals many centuries old. Some five thousand of the most valuable works are housed at present in Moscow. I hope that some day Bishop Mezrop, who is still in the prime of life, will be made Katholikos, for he is a cosmopolitan and a world citizen of the type America understands.

To my great regret I could not explore the wonderful ancient capital of Ani, but I spent several hours among the newly excavated ruins of Zvartnotz, between Etchmiadzin and Erivan, and found here a church built by Narsis and a cuneiform tablet reciting the deeds of King Van, which alone would justify an archæologist in making a pilgrimage to Armenia. To the tireless enthusiasm of one of the priests at Etchmiadzin the uncovering of this ancient memorial is due. There is a well so deep that the splash of a stone is not heard for five seconds after the stone is dropped, and about one hundred and twenty feet down there is a door which the priest longs to enter, but his figure is too corpulent. He thinks it is the door to a treasure-house, and one of these days a romantic story may come out of the Zvartnotz ruins and the well.

With the cordial sanction of the government and the Prime Minister, Doctor Fossum and I undertook an expedition into the region occupied by the Tartars and the Kurds, lying between the River Araxes and Mt. Ararat. This region is in name Armenian, but at the present time no

Armenian can travel in this country without incurring the murderous hostility of the natives. Our enterprise was in the nature of a pilgrimage of amity and good will, to feel out the sentiment of the people and do what we could to create a better feeling between the two sides of the river. As propitiatory offerings we carried 250 suits of pajamas, which had seen hard service in French hospitals, 100 boxes of cigarettes and 15 pounds of sugar. The Armenian Government and the Press gave us a farewell banquet in the club at Erivan, and this event was made the occasion for the most cordial expressions of the friendship between the two republics represented at the festal board. We started the next morning. It was necessary to ford the Araxes River, and the water was over the saddles of the horses. We crossed a sort of No Man's Land with an escort of a Persian soldier and three Tartars heavily armed. We then took up our residence for six days on the roof of a house in the mud village of Sirbahan, locally known as Urtakent, close to the village of Bashkent. The village of Sirbahan had lately been pillaged and turned upside down by marauding Kurds, and about one-fifth of a normal population of perhaps 1000 remained. Doctor Fossum had a high fever for three days, and the consequences might have been serious had it not been for the abundant supply of the milk of the water-buffalo. The boys whom we sent to the river to obtain water for us were shot-at by the Armenian guard on the further bank, so that they were obliged to desist. We sent messengers to Ali Aga, the most powerful of the Kurdish chiefs on the mountain side, in order that we might place ourselves in his charge and secure his escort for an attempt on Mt. Ararat. The first of our messengers was captured by rival Kurds and held a prisoner for two days. The second messenger was also caught and stripped of his clothing and money. Of course, we made up to him his losses. The third and the fourth messengers got through, and the chief came, bringing with him seven followers all armed to the roots of their hair. He had been disturbed by reports that the Tartars planned a peace treaty with Ar-

menia, though our messages to him said nothing of this matter. He had already sent a written message to the Tartars to say that if they entered into a compact with the Armenians he would have no more to do with the Tartars. It began to seem futile to win over the Tartars or the Kurds from the bristling hostility of their attitude toward our friends, but we may hope that the seed planted by our interviews may in time bear fruit for peace and good will by plain and mountain side along the turbulent Araxes.

While we were waiting for Ali Aga to come down from his mountain eyrie, no end of delegations from various Kurdish encampments came to see us. It was important to get Ali Aga himself, because he owes his appointment to the Persian government at Maku, and he is the over-lord of all the tribes on his flank of the mountain to where the sway of Shamsadinoff, the Russian Kurd, begins. In other words, he controls, more or less loosely, the roving bands that infest the eastern half of the northern slope of the Ararat range. To our particular purpose was the fact that his encampment lay squarely on our pathway up the mountain—the route followed by travelers up to 1913, when the last climb of the mountain was made. A few days before in a preliminary reconnoissance on Little Ararat, Doctor Fossum had taken a French missionary, who narrowly escaped murder at the hands of the Kurds because he resembled an Armenian. Doctor Fossum, author of a Kurdish dictionary, which virtually made Kurdish a written tongue, is one of the very few white men who are fluent in Kurdish as in Tartar Kurdish, and the great advantage of being with him was that if they talked of getting us into a lonely valley and doing away with us for the sake of our money or our clothes, he would be likely to know of it.

The conferences with the Kurds were carried on while the doctor's fever raged. He lay in state on a fat pillow on the rugs at one end of the mud room, and the Kurds knelt round us with their arsenal of weapons on the floor pointing our way. At a critical juncture in the proceedings tea

and cigarettes would be served. I had a little quinine, iodine and zinc ointment, with which I treated malaria, body sores and gunshot wounds. One of my patients was the man who was most anxious to dispose of the French gentleman who preceded me. He was very polite and grateful when I lanced the back of his hand for pus and dressed a gash in his cheek. With him was about the toughest character we met. This bad man was named Ali Aga,—the same name as that of the chieftain for whom we were waiting. We got the two mixed up at first, and it was lucky that we sorted them out, for this man would have done for us both if we had given him the chance. Two palefaces, one of them a very sick man, would probably not seem a formidable party to a Kurdish tribe. This miscreant was blind in one eye, so that the sobriquet of "Kö," "The Blind One," was added to his name. He looked like a human hyena. He scowled and glared when he spoke. His abdomen was festooned with gunshot wounds and he was not averse to lifting up the flap of his blouse and exhibiting these decorations as tokens of his military prowess. We gave him fifty suits of pajamas for his people, and he demanded sixty. We gave him cigarettes and sugar, and he clamorously importuned us for more. He wound up a very active day of debate and provocation by taking up his abode on the other part of our roof and shinning down a mulberry tree three times in the night to where one of our horses stood. The horse was worth one hundred Turkish liras in gold, or four hundred and fifty dollars. He meant to sneak out through our tunnel-like entrance with the animal, but our guards on the roof spotted him each time, and said they would shoot him if he tried it. He was almost as much of a pest as the myriad of flies, fleas and mosquitos, which plagued us unceasingly, in a region which is one of the finest malaria nurseries in the world with its many rice-fields and stagnant pools.

We were glad enough when the real Ali Aga came, for we could pit him and his men against the rest. Some of these Kurds and Tartars are charming gentlemen murderers and

cattle-stealers, and we did our level best to make friends with them all. When we finally got started, we climbed from seven in the morning until nine in the evening, and the little army of men and horses fell away till only one Tartar lord from Bashkent and one Kurdish chief from Sardar Bulagh were left. We camped on a slope of lava rock not quite the size of half a cot bed, twelve thousand feet above sea level on Greater Ararat. The space was so small, in fact, that Doctor Fossum and I stood up and swung our arms to keep warm while the others slept. Until three o'clock in the morning we looked down two thousand feet to where the star of the campfire with the horses shone. At three that light went out and at four a rival band of Kurds swept down on the camp and stole four horses, including one of ours. But we didn't know this till we got down and found no camp, no men, no horses where we had left all three. We started on up at six o'clock. Doctor Fossum and I had had no sleep. Breakfast consisted of a cup of tea, made with an alcohol burner, for there is no wood here—nothing but one inferno of rocks piled upon another. And if you eat a big breakfast and then climb high you will get the mountain sickness surely. After crossing ridges for four hours and climbing a thousand feet higher we came to the rocks at the foot of the final snow slope against the northeast ridge and there we piled our heavy blanket rolls and the two gentlemen of the Tartar village and the Kurdish tribe. This was at thirteen thousand feet. We dug into the snow with our mulberry sticks for three hours more and two thousand feet higher, to fifteen thousand feet or so. Then, with little warning, a hideous black storm swept out of the cloudland of the summit. Victory was in our grasp, and it hurt like anything to let go of the prize, but we had to, for it was a life or death matter. The stinging hail came like the teeth of the ice demon and bit us in our tracks. A high wind roared and threatened to blow us from the slope. We threw ourselves flat on our backs and in a few minutes swooped down through the toilsome ascent of three hours.

We gathered up our comrades, spent the night in luxury in Ali Aga's tents in the saddle between the mountains, and came with his own red horse back to Armenia. He had taken twelve oxen and a horse from his rivals as security for the return of the stolen steeds, and there was no doubt that in time we should have our horse back. In the meantime, by the chief's insistence, his horse has been champing the barley of the infidel in the stables of the Near East Relief at Erivan.

In conclusion, I wish simply to emphasize certain needs of the Near East Relief in the field as I see them.

1. In the first place, many more trained American workers are needed of the type—for example—of E. A. Yarow, Mrs. Harris at Alexandropol, L. O. Fossum at Erivan, Captain Dangerfield, Mr. Barton and Miss Meyers at Alexandropol. I should like to see more families and more older people to maintain the stabilizing social influences and show to the community the example of the American family in the American home.

2. A few Red Cross nurses could they be procured, would be invaluable. The trained nurse in Asia Minor is almost unknown.

3. There must be special teachers for the blind and for manual and industrial training. There must be specialists in diseases of the eye and skin, and specialists in orthopædics. There must be trained agriculturists like the men who go out in the demonstration trains of the University of Wisconsin.

4. There should be a representative of the State Department at Erivan to establish direct contact with the American Government and to relieve the Near East Relief of functions that appertain to diplomacy rather than to philanthropy.

## POSTSCRIPT.

This report was written before the sad tidings came of the death of Doctor Fossum from nervous exhaustion. He had been doing the work of ten at Erivan before he started on this "vacation" journey. After the attack of fever of which I write, he seemed to have recovered completely. I used to call him in jest "the iron man," for there seemed no limit to his endurance. He insisted it would not harm him to climb the mountain, and the day after our return to Erivan he was at his desk as usual, the picture of health and good humour. His death, as that of a soldier-saint who gave his life for the sake of others and for all mankind, "as a lover lays a rose at the feet of his beloved," must nerve us all to take up his work and carry it on for his sake and in his name.

---

The recent chapter of swift-moving incidents whereby the grinding millstones of Bolshevism and Turkish Nationalism have met on the bank of the Araxes, in a vain attempt to crush out the soul as well as the lifeblood of a people, may seem to show a temporary success for Armenia's bitter foes. But with the powerful leverage America can apply, the hateful yoke will be thrown off, and the emancipation of the Armenian republic at last achieved forever. The action of President Wilson in accepting a mediatorial office has been given practical effect by his appointment of Henry Morgenthau to act for him. No better choice could have been made, and whatever constructive plan he presents will have the support of humane, compassionate, liberty-loving America, Friend of Armenia.

The people of Armenia themselves have no love for the present intolerable regime that the Bolsheviks and the Nationalists in conjunction have imposed on them. Their morale is not undermined. In patience, schooled by suffering, with unshaken faith in God, they watch and pray, they work and wait. They submit outwardly, for a time, to an

alien rule only because they must—only because the iron heel is on their throats—and because the Allies thus far have left them to their fate. This involuntary submission is simply a life-saving measure. Without munitions of defence, without oil for transportation, without food to eat, and with only fine words from those who should have helped them to stave off the foe, they have been politically eclipsed for a time; but in the dark and beneath the surface the ancient spirit smoulders still and will break forth again into a flame. The history of all the centuries has proved that the spirit of this folk—faithful unto death through martyrdom and massacre, true to a trust imposed by God Himself—is unquenchable, “till the day breaks and the shadows flee away.”

*Fullerton L. Waldo*









Above: Ruins at Zvartnotz, near Erivan.



Above: A street in Erivan, capital of the Armenian Republic.

Below: Street in Erivan, showing Near East Relief headquarters.



Above: From the ruins at Zvartnotz, near Erivan. The American eagle appears to have been born about 400 A. D.

Below: A Greek refugee family living in a delouser at Batum.



Below: Armenian orphan girls in the care of the Near East Relief.



